

## Rethinking the Mission: Part 2

### Quotes and Questions

1. What does *living wisely among nonbelievers* (Col. 4:5-6) have to do with how we steward our time, lives and priorities? The time that we spend with Christians or engaged in typical church meetings and activities vs. the time we spend with nonbelieving neighbors, coworkers, friends and family?
2. How can we engage with nonbelievers in ways that will provoke them to ask us questions (living incarnationally)? How important is it to genuinely develop deep relationships with nonbelievers, not merely surface relationships, and to engage in those relationships in non-sanctified spaces? If we are going to give ourselves this sort of time to engage in relationships, how widely should we spread ourselves across those relationships, vs. being strategic about purposely developing a few deep relationships?
3. Do we have a *'go to them'* mentality, or do we have an *attractional* mentality, where we create "sacred spaces" with the expectation that nonbelievers will come to us? (We have engaged in ESL, and Nic@Nite activities, all of which are meant to attract our neighbors to our sacred spaces. It's been twenty years since Kevin challenged us, and we have only just begun to move beyond the tip of the iceberg. We must embrace our simple church structure, use our homes to develop deep relationships with one another and neighbors. And we must be creative and daring in our life choices and enterprises, in a way that engages with the culture and encourages our nonbelieving friends to ask us questions. And we must be ready to answer the sorts of questions that will generate.
4. What sort of cost and sacrifice should we expect to make in order to engage in living this way? In other words, just how radical does Jesus expect us to be? How can we live this way, while simultaneously deepening our relationships with one another (shared projects)?
5. Do we value and actively engage in thinking biblically about our spheres of ministry (relationships with nonbelievers) and lives together, and addressing them with imagination, creativity, innovation, and daring? How proficient can we expect to be at "thinking biblically" and doing "theology in culture" if we do not seriously engage in mastering the first principles of Christ, and developing projects that shape our hearts, minds and lives?

#### Quotes:

"By definition, the missional church, is always outward looking. Always changing, as culture continues to change. And always faithful to the word of God. In many places the missional church is so radical, it barely resembles the church as we know it. In other cases, it might appear conventional, but is actually incarnating itself into its community in surprising and exciting ways. Above all, we are convinced that what will ultimately be required is Christian leadership that values imagination, creativity, innovation and daring. What do you think? Does this description describe Grace Church? Are we perpetually asking the questions, "What has called us, as a church, to be and to do in our current cultural situation?" Are we shaping our lives to fit our cultural context in order to transform that culture for the kingdom of God? Are we always looking outward, always changing as culture continues to change? Always faithful to the word of God?"

"Are we a church whose leadership values imagination, creativity, innovation and daring. I'm not asking these questions to be critical, I'm asking them because I am convinced that we have allowed the dying culture of Christendom to dictate to us about how we think about the church

and how we do church, rather than thinking about our culture and how we can live wisely among those who are not Christians and make the most of every opportunity. I am not simply talking about rearranging the furniture or replacing pews with chairs. I'm talking about something far more radical, far more creative [and] ultimately, far more biblical. I have always been convinced that the church exists to build up the saints, to edify the saints, to minister to one another, to establish believers, and that task must be ongoing, it must continue; but I am increasingly disturbed that we are not engaged in the mission. Where is our impact on culture? Where is our witness to unbelievers? Where is our involvement in the community? Why aren't people asking us questions? Are we truly living wisely among non-Christians? Are we making the most of every opportunity? I suspect not. But this is exactly how Jesus has told us we are to live.

"Have we created sanctified spaces [properties, buildings] into which unbelievers must enter to encounter the gospel? Have we marked off a sacred space from the people of our culture so that they think they have to walk onto this property, through the door, [o]r into this room in order to encounter Jesus. If we say "No, we have not done that." Then tell me, how much of our time, how much of our effort, and how much of our money is invested in this assembling ourselves [vs.] seeping into the cracks and crevices of Clifton society in order to be Christ to those who do not yet know Him. Whether we like to admit it, as a church, we operate almost exclusively from an attractational point of view, rather than from an incarnational point of view."

## SERMON NOTES

### *“Rethinking the Mission: An Introduction”*

Kevin L. Rhodes (June 13, 2004)

*Just as the first-century disciples had to reorient their thinking to a missional perspective, twenty-first century disciples need to do the same*

*“Christendom ... had effectively become the metanarrative for an entire epoch. A metanarrative is an overarching story that claims to contain truth applicable to all people at all times in all cultures. While the Christendom story no longer defines Western culture, it still remains the primary definer of the church’s self-understanding in almost every Western nation, including and perhaps especially the United States.” (Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 8)*

<b><i>Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Mode (A.D. 32 to 313)</i></b>	<b><i>Advance and Triumph of Christendom Mode (A.D. 313 to present)</i></b>
Didn't have dedicated sacral buildings. Often underground and persecuted.	Buildings became central to the notion and experience of the church.
Leadership operated with a fivefold ministry-leadership ethos.	Leadership by an institutionally ordained clergy operating primarily in a pastor-teacher mode.
Grassroots, decentralized movement.	Institutional-hierarchical notion of leadership and structure.
Church is on the margins of society and underground.	Church is perceived as central to society and surrounding culture.
Missionary, incarnational-sending church.	Attractional/"extractional."

On the reverse side record any additional thoughts, comments or questions